

WASHINGTON POST  
9 March 1987

# Take Me to Your Reader!

Accounts of UFOs Invade the Best-Seller Lists

By Curt Suplee  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Heads up, America. They're here. Again.

After a 10-year lull in public interest about UFOs, 1987 looks to be the Year of the Saucer—if not a whole cabinetful of cosmological crockery. According to Leading Susceptibility Indicators, we're in for a deluge of UFOria that'll make the Galveston flood look like a bathtub ring:

- Three reputable publishers—Random House, Morrow and Atlantic Monthly Press—are releasing major nonfiction accounts of humans contacted, abducted or tortured by extraterrestrials.

- Popular infatuation with the UFO sighted by a Japan Air Lines pilot in November has grown sky-high—forcing the Federal Aviation Administration into the mail-order business. To meet the ravening demand, the agency is now selling information packages at \$194.30 each containing tapes of the crew, statements by air controllers, the pilot's drawings and color photographs of radar images.

- "Our membership has gone up 10 percent in the past two months," says Walt Andrus, international director of the 1,500-member Mutual UFO Network, "and our mail has doubled. People are realizing that there is something to this after all."

"It's been building for quite a while," says Bruce Macabee, a Navy research physicist and chairman of the Washington-based Fund for UFO Research. And the new books, he believes, will provoke "an outcry for more information" from a galvanized public. "The negativists haven't realized what's going on yet." (They won't have to wait past June 26, when MUFON '87—the International Symposium of the Mutual UFO Network—convenes at American University here for three days.)

- Mass curiosity about paranormal freakery has hit its apogee. "Channelers"—a new species of medium purporting to lease their larynxes to astral spirits—are being taken seriously outside the tabloids. Citizens now know more about Shirley MacLaine's multiple past lives than Franklin Roosevelt's one. Oral Roberts reports horn-to-horn combat with

Satan himself. Bookstores and newsstands are doing a fierce business in supernatural subjects from auras to crystals.

- The sour malaise and doomsday anxiety seeping across the nation are the sort that, in the past, have proved propitious for cosmic omens in general and airborne dinnerware in particular. (Two weeks ago, a puny 20-second flare over New York and Connecticut resulted in hundreds of phone calls.) Add the darkling shambles of the Reagan regime (maybe they'll skip that "Take-Me-to-Your-Leader" stuff this time), and who knows what demons will rise from the baleful psychic muck?

One thing's for sure: They will be nothing like the winsome critters we claimed to see in the '50s, back when saucers had fins like Edsels and space folks acted like intergalactic Jaycees. In those days, an abductee named Buck Nelson sold little packets of fur at \$5 each, which he said came from a Venusian Saint Bernard weighing 385 pounds. Another *soi-disant* contactee, Howard Menger, explained on the "Tonight" show how easy it was to breathe on the moon and subsequently cut a record entitled "The Song From Saturn"—which ditty, he averred, was "actual music that came from another planet."

But that was 30 years ago. The new books provide a more lugubrious forecast.

\* \* \* \* \*

## An Age of Suspicion

Every year 1,000 or more reports reach the appropriate organization. From 1947 to 1969, it was the Air Force, which in 1959 issued a directive to all commands stating that "investigations and analysis of UFOs are directly related to the Air Force's responsibility for the defense of the United States." But 10 years later, following a still-controversial study, the Air Force dumped the project completely, citing insufficient evidence.

Much of the Air Force material has been released to the public, but many UFOlogists believe that the government is still concealing information and/or physical evidence. Their doubts date from the same auspicious year as the Arnold sighting. In mid-'47, something crashed in the New Mexico desert and was obtained by the Air Force, which at first announced that it was "a flying disc," but subsequently put out word that the wreckage was merely a weather balloon and radar reflector. Many UFOlogists were dubious, and dark rumors circulated that the recovered material contained miraculous lightweight metals and the remains of insectlike pilots.

Intermittently thereafter, the matter of the purloined cadavers has risen anew, along with other complaints of suppressed evidence. (Former CIA director Adm. Roscoe Hillenkoetter charged in 1960 that the Air Force was attempting to "hide the facts" about UFOs and to "silence its personnel.") The fracas escalated in the early '80s as the Washington-based Citi-

2.

zens Against UFO Secrecy initiated numerous lawsuits and Freedom of Information Act demands. In 1983, CAUS head Larry Bryant filed suit in U.S. District Court here demanding that the Air Force release the New Mexico material. "This is a cosmic Watergate," Bryant declared. The suit was dismissed. The argument continues.

It will doubtless be rekindled this year, though it is ghastly to imagine how an already dispirited nation would take the revelation that some GAO warehouse was full of space-stiffs and saucer parts.

"I can understand the rationale of a government cover-up," says Budd Hopkins. "The whole economy—stocks, bonds, mortgages, capital investment—is based on the idea that 20 years from now, things are gonna be pretty much the same."

But if the feds announced tomorrow that aliens had arrived, "I'd rather be in the liquor business than the real-estate business."

---

*EXCERPTED*

WASHINGTON POST  
3 March 1986

## Document File

### WHO'S ON FIRST?

**T**oday's document file is a needed corrective to what the Central Intelligence Agency rightly identified as an error in the Quiz that appeared on this page Feb. 24.

The Washington Post made the same error in its obituary of Admiral Sidney W. Souers on Jan. 18, 1973.



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
Phone: (703) 351-7676

27 February 1986

Mr. Leonard Downie, Jr.  
Managing Editor  
THE WASHINGTON POST  
1150 15th Street, N. W.  
Washington, D.C. 20071

Dear Len:

Your "Federal Report" page of 24 February gives the wrong answer to its quiz question, "who was the first director of the Central Intelligence Agency?" It was not Rear Admiral Sidney W. Souers, as the quiz answer states, but rather Rear Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter.

Admiral Souers was indeed the first Director of Central Intelligence, taking charge of a new interdepartmental organization called the Central Intelligence Group from January to June 1946. But as you note elsewhere on the same page, the Central Intelligence Agency was not established until after Congress enacted the National Security Act of 1947. Admiral Hillenkoetter, the third Director of Central Intelligence, was the first director of CIA when it was formed on September 18, 1947.

I would appreciate THE POST running a correction.

Sincerely,

*George V. Lauder*  
George V. Lauder  
Director, Public Affairs